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Study to determine why, under present admission plan, some students fail to graduate within a 4-year period, what educational shifts are made, and why some students drop out.

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ACADEMIC SUCCESS OF STUDENTS ADMITTED FROM THE VARIOUS FIFTHS OF HIGH SCHOOL RANK TO THE PENNSYLVANIA STATE UNIVERSITY

- Joseph F. Krawiec -

Students who graduated from the upper three-fifths of high school rank in Pennsylvania are admitted to the University by certification. Applicants who rank in the fourth or fifth-fifths must pass an entrance examination.

The Problem

Under the present admission plan why do some fail to graduate within a four year period? What educational shifts are made? Why do some drop out? The study cannot answer all parts of these questionas and all may shed light upon some of the parts.

Procedure

Data over a four year period Sept. 1948 to June 1952 were studied from the representative colleges: Chemistry and Physics, Education, Home Economics and in the College of Liberal Arts the Commerce cucciculum. The study follows in detail some 1391 students through their four year program.

Major findings

The percent admitted by ranks first fifth-fifths were as follows: 34.18 per cent, 26.97 per cen, 18.84 per cent, 9.50 per cent and 6.55 per cent. These groups received degrees in the following proportion respectively. 60 per cent, 39 per cent, 32 per cent, 18 per cent, and 23 per cent. A study of age at entrance slightly favors the older student academically. The year of graduation from high school from which the student graduated had no significant bearing on academic achievement.

Good all-univeristy averages, between 2.00 and 3.00 grade points were received by the first to last fifth as follows: 28 per cent, 8.54 per cent, 3.42 per cent, 2.23 per cent and 3.30 per cent. The minus grade averages acquired from the various fifths ranged from 0.56 in first fifth to 22 per cent in fifth-fifth. The courses in which the students had the most difficulty were: Mathematics, Chemistry, English Composition, Foreign Languages, and History. The individuals who transferred to another curriculum persisted to fail most frequently in Mathematics, Chemisty, English Composition, Physical Sciences, and Economics.

A total of 358 (24.74 per cent) transferred to another curriculum. The greatest per cent to transfer were admitted from the first and second-fifths of high school rank. Of the 51 separate curriculums to which these students transferred the order of gain in students was as follows: Arts and Letters, Education, Psychology and Physical Education. The Division of Intermediate Registration received 174 students: 48 of whom were still students at the end of four years, 30 received degrees and 96 dropped out.

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Poor scholarship was the reason for 19.65 per cent dropping out. The transferred to another university, 7.56 per cent, drop-outs without a reason 13.78 per cent. Dropping because of ill health, military service, dissatisfied with curriculum, personal reasons or financial reasons, 16.65 per cent. Students who failed to graduate in four years, 137, were divided as follows: Left the university one or more semesters before returning, 36, lacked courses for graduation, 49, low grade average, 49.

Recommendations

Since, approximately 50 per cent of the admitted students were lost to the University before graduating, more attention should be given to the personal and scholastic problems of the individual. The dissertation provides details on the courses and curriculums within the representative colleges which could profitably be reviewed. Further studies are suggested. Description of the lack of academic adjustment is the most important outcome of this study.

U. S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION AND WELFARE
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